



## **CAREERS FROM** **A - Z**

**“Careers from A-Z”** is a year long classroom publishing experience for Kindergarten students, age 5-6, with multiple language and neurological disabilities. The young publishers create a dictionary page about a career that begins with letter A- Z throughout week A to week Z during the school year. Students cooperate as a group to write a 4-5 line language experience story about the career of the week. Each page is illustrated by classmates and cooperative efforts are used to type the story on the computer. The final draft is computer scanned and printed for each individual child. The completed dictionaries are spiral bound with a student designed cover. The dictionaries provide students an opportunity to practice language skills with their parents during a culminating “Career Day” event. Parents with various careers listed in the publication come to share their career. The local baker provides the refreshments and parents read, “Careers from A-Z” with their child.

This year long publishing experience motivates educationally challenging students to improve language skills, fine motor skills, and cooperative communication and social skills. A-Z special needs publishers achieve the following objectives:

1. Students use critical thinking skills to pick a career that begins with the letter of the week.
2. Students are exposed to 26 different career choices and begin planning for workplace readiness skills.
3. Students use technology tools to practice language and computer keyboard skills.
4. Students will organize words in 4-5 accurate sentences about a career topic.
5. Students will practice fine motor skills to illustrate each career choice.
6. Students review language skills with their parents using the career dictionary as a tool.
7. Students are exposed to and personally involved with 3-4 career presentations.

Children with special needs require extra motivation to excel and remain persistent at overcoming difficult developmental challenges. This project facilitates a year long pride and motivation in publishing a finished product, while practicing language, fine motor skills, technology skills, and workplace readiness skills. This practice can be replicated by any Kindergarten teacher, however it is an excellent tool for inspiring educationally challenging and developmentally delayed early learners.

The Kindergarten students that participate in this project are evaluated and classified as having multiple language and neurological delays and difficulties. Individualized Education Programs are developed for each child. These IEP's list language, fine motor, thinking, and social communication skills to be developed. Expectations for each child's performance and involvement is based on the child's IEP. Each student is required to earn the privilege to work in the "publishing center" on the career book. The publishing privilege is earned by having responsibility for daily behavior control. This provides necessary behavior modification to assist students with neurological and emotional body control and ability to remain on task during educational activities.

This year long publishing experience combines the IEP goals and objectives for each child with the New Jersey Department of Education Core Curriculum Content and Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards. The students are provided a format to practice skills that are challenging with an enriched self esteem & the extra motivation provided by the finished product, the Careers from A-Z dictionary. Beyond the basic skills practiced, a variety of learning modalities are used, problem solving skills are taught, technical skills are enhanced, and the self worth of each child is boosted. This project is an excellent tool to meet a large number of Core Curriculum Standards and prepare students for workplace readiness.

### **Standards and Practices Addressed in the Careers from A-Z project**

#### **1. *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards***

- A.. Standard 1 - Students develop career awareness and planning skills as they study each career from A-Z.
- B. Standard 2 - Students learn computer keyboard skills to type words in sentences, and are exposed to the use of a computer scanner to publish pages in the dictionary.
- C. Standard 3 - Students must use critical thinking skills to choose careers for each
- D. Standard 4 - Students are allowed the privilege to work on a publishing project if they demonstrate self control skills during other daily activities.

#### **2. *Core Curriculum Content Standards***

- A. Standard 1.2 - Students refine perceptual, intellectual and technical skills in the process of illustrating and describing a career.
- B. Standard 1.3 - The finished product, Careers from A-Z is an artistic product completed cooperatively by the class.
- C. Standard 1.6 - Design skills are developed, as students plan the form and placement of pictures, letters, sentences, etc. on each completed page.
- D. Standard 3.1 - Speaking skills are refined as students read their books to various audiences during culminating activities.
- E. Standard 3.2 - Career presentations, and language experience stories for each career provide a variety of formats to practice and perfect listening skills.
- F. Standard 3.3 - Students are exposed to writing clear, organized language about a career picture.
- G. Standard 3.5 - Career puzzles, videos, and career presentations which are used to supplement the project provide a multitude of non-textual visual experiences.

Learning the ABC's can come alive and practical with the use of this "Best Practice": Careers from A-Z publishing project. It provides a year long goal for multiply challenging and developmentally delayed Kindergarten students to reach towards while working on overcoming weaknesses and delays. Students' progress and improvement is documented by the increased proficiency of writing and illustrating skills for each page from A-Z. The project and culminating activities use the following assessment measures to determine the extent to which the objectives of this project have been met:

**Objective #1** - Students will use critical thinking skills to pick a career for each letter A-Z - Teacher/informal observation is used to document time & effort required by the class to choose each career.

**Objective #2** - Students will be exposed to 26 career choices - The final publication documents this goal as accomplished.

**Objective #3** - Students' technology skills are advanced - Evaluated by the completion of the document, informal observation, and a student interview about technology skills learned.

**Objective #4** - Students will organize words in complete sentences - Audio tape recordings of each language experience story writing session are used to evaluate the improvement of language and speaking skills for each child.

**Objective #5** - Students will improve fine motor skills while illustrating each career - informal observations & the final publication documents improvement of these skills.

**Objective #6** - Students will practice oral language skills with parents - "Parent reading day" provides feedback from parents about improvement of speech skills. In class language sharing, in which pages are presented orally, provide students an opportunity to evaluate their own progress.

**Objective #7** - Students are exposed to numerous careers and personnel - A culminating Career Day activity provides a final evaluation the childrens' language progress.

**Careers from A-Z** is a "Best Practice" that was designed as a fun way to learn the ABC's. It has given the children the motivation and cooperation skills to complete each page together. The students use technology to write about and illustrate careers. It is a privilege in our class to work in the "publishing corner". This provides the students a motivating factor to control and maintain appropriate body control and behavior. ***Careers from A-Z*** is an activity that engages students in the use of technology while helping them to excel in language skills & learn their ABC's. The students' exposure to careers also helps the students build a bridge to the century 2000.